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Pertelote | Seventh Edition, December 2, 1982

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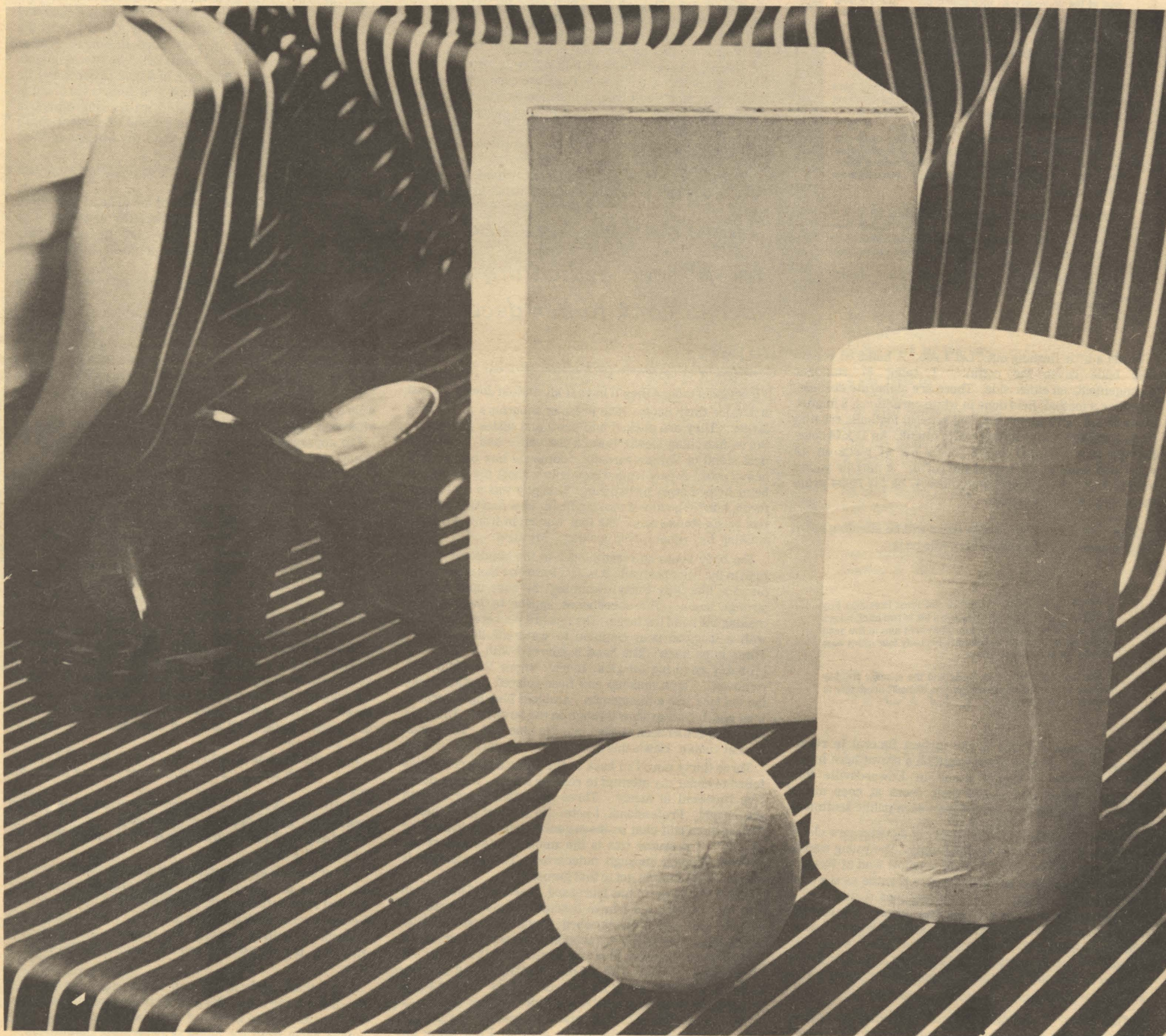
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Pertelote

Seventh Edition
December 2, 1982



By Randy Gravette

Eulogies for Rob

A Short Story

By JERRY HARRIS

Gertis says I have a talent for this kinda thing. And I guess he's right. A young reporter would just louse it up. You gotta have a little empathy to do this kinda thing right. No, a young reporter would ask all those "how-do-you-feel" questions and come away with nothing. Like the TV reporters. Christ. Makes you wonder what they're teaching in J-school.

Looks like the service is about to start. I can't sit in my car sipping bourbon all afternoon and get anything done. Guess I'd better write this down before I forget:

Holiness Tabernacle occupies a full city block a half-mile east of the university off McFarland Blvd. The physical plant includes a modernistic two-story sandstone sanctuary and classroom complex, a residential hall for 135 college students, an aging A-frame used as a kindergarten, and a remodeled Howard Johnson's called to service as a student center.

Langley, a highly-touted freshman receiver, lived here and could be found most Thursday afternoons throwing passes to friends in the parking lot.

I'll save a lot of time later by roughing out a few paragraphs as I go along. I want to get to that basketball game on time. After all, this is pretty routine stuff. Worth maybe 12 inches on the state page. Well, let's see what the sanctuary looks like.

The room is remarkably accoustical despite an acre of azure carpet and 150 pews bearing powder-blue velveteen cushions. Up front, a back-lit mahogany cross hangs in relief 30 feet tall above a rock garden baptistry overrun with plastic ferns.

At the foot of the cross, chrome handles on a metallic brown coffin reflect diffused blue light emitted from the stained glass.

Needs a little fleshing out. Let's see. A hundred yellow rose buds cover the coffin. I count 87 standing arrangements on either side. There are elaborate designs, including a football field done in white carnations, a helmet made of red and white roses, and several footballs created from dried flowers on beds of white mums. An 11 x 14 color portrait in a gold-leaf frame seems out of place on its varnished easel at the foot of the coffin. A narrow young man in a red jersey with the number 47 on his chest grins sheepishly from the picture.

Glad I got here early. Today there will be standing room only. Guess I need a graph telling who he is:

Rob Langley, 19, son of Commercial Trust President Foy Langley, died 17 days ago. He gave a lift to two hitch-hikers who said their car broke down. They shot him in the head with a .22 target pistol and dumped his body four miles west of town in the Warrior River.

The late discovery of the body and the ensuing autopsy account for the extraordinarily large turnout, according to friends of the family.

Local papers say this is the largest funeral in recent memory. My guess is there would be a crowd here in any case. There's no bigger name in Edwardsville than Langley. Merchants closed their doors at noon out of respect. Langley is not apt to forget such public sentiment.

I've chosen the left outside corner of a center pew closest to the four rows reserved for the family. The young woman beside me with her face buried in a yellow wad of Wendy's Hamburgers napkins is barely able to breathe as she vents her anguish. A man behind me, perhaps a minister, is whispering a prayer against the background of multitudes weeping and blowing congestion from tear-soaked noses. I'm here reluctantly, you know. The editor wants "atmosphere" for the story, see. Hopefully, this guy will be planted before the 6:30 tipoff. I got twenty bucks on the Blazers.

What's this? The funeral director is pushing aside roses and unlatching the coffin. It's gotta be grim. A body becomes pretty mellow after two weeks. Not to mention the devastating effects of an autopsy. Why's he taking so long? These undertakers are all alike. They feed off events like this. This guy's putting on a show for us. Look at the way he wipes fingerprints off the lid with his handkerchief.

Mourners are forming a line at the far right of the

auditorium. A curious bunch. Several women with beehive hair-dos and simple pastel dresses stand dabbing Kleenex at their eyes. There are a dozen or more cheerleader types with mascara-streaked cheeks consoling one another. Somber-faced fathers pace nervously in poorly matched suits speaking in low tones. Fuzzy-faced teenaged boys shift about jingling pocket change. Others join the line in two's and three's. The undertaker, satisfied with the cadaver, now motions for the procession to begin. Something weird flits through my mind. Southern funerals are really something. I'm reminded here of a cafeteria line. Each mourner files by for a visual helping. I remove my coat to reserve my seat and, clutching notepad, join the line. I accept a program from a smiling usher whose dark green tie doesn't quite span his beer-gut. He steps through the line and motions for an assistant.

"Let's show a little hustle," he says. "The quicker they get programs, the quicker they get seated."

A three-by-three halftone of Rob sitting in an easy chair dominates the program cover. Page two carries a poem by Mick Breen, Rob's best friend. I need to interview the kid if there's time, I note. There's a long list of eulogizers. This thing may take forever. There's a note here about the fiancée dedicating a special song to her deceased lover. It'll make good copy if I can quote from the lyrics. "Everything I Own" was written by Stephen Gates, I think. His high school and college football coaches are going to speak and

*'There's a note here about
the fiancée dedicating a
special song to her deceased
lover.'*

I'll bet good money they'll have it all written down. I'll just ask for their notes. The press of mourners is growing larger. They are packed into pews and aisles and exits. We're marching slowly toward the coffin and I'm at the first stand of flowers already. Someone has broken into heavy sobs. A long-legged blonde in a short black dress is being helped away by two men. This guy was a real heart-throb, huh? The line is moving faster now and the coffin is five or six steps away. The four women in front of me are walking by without even looking. My turn.

The body bears no resemblance to the handsome young man in the color portrait. It is as if someone has squished in his face like Silly Putty, ramming the nose upward at a strange angle. The cheekbones appear to have spread making the head too large. The lips are puckered and thick with a froggish pout common to water-swollen bodies. There is no neck. The head is covered with a black wig probably covering surgical marks where the skull was removed. Thick makeup and flesh-colored lipstick make the kid look like a mannequin. Ambient blue light permits faint black spots to show through on the forehead. The body looks like it has been stuffed into the blue suit. The hands are not visible. How's this for a society funeral?

Three-thirty p.m. I'm back at the pew. Some cretin has failed to honor my attempt to reserve a seat. No big deal. I've squeezed in nicely. Three musicians have entered stage right. Professional, I note. No signs of grief there. Two of them chit-chat as the organist strikes up "Amazing Grace." I presume this is the minister standing at the podium flipping through notecards. The procession is almost over. I might get to that game yet.

The weeping noise has increased, it seems. The woman with the napkins must have tear ducts stretching all the way to her feet. Black-robed youngsters, students at County High, are filling in a section of ten pews reserved for the 100-member youth choir organized for this service. No other seats remain. The 350-man football squad now entering must stand along the panels of glass. The place is choked with people. It is hot despite air conditioning.

Four p.m. The minister raises his hands. People are beginning to stand as the family enters. First come the mother, the father, three brothers, two sisters, the fiancée, a cadre of uncles, cousins, grandparents. Three bony funeral directors are herding them into pews. The organist has started another hymn, something sad and vaguely familiar. Gut-wrenching sobs pour from the family section. I may have to stand at the front exit to hear anything.

The soloist is beautiful and so is the voice. Here come the lyrics from the dedication: "You sheltered me from harm, kept me warm, gave my life to me, set me free. You gave me the finest years of my life. I would give everything I own just to have you back again..." Great stuff for a bold-face inset. The number is causing a lot of commotion. The chick next to me has used up the Wendy's napkins. Now there's some baby screaming near the back. Why the hell don't they use the nursery? I can't get quotes for a color story with stuff like this going on. I wonder if Kelsey is going to be back on the court tonight. He was high point man last game.

Four-thirty p.m. Time to work. I need the preacher's quotes verbatim:

"Let us pray. O Lord, our hearts have been stricken with the deepest sorrow, our community has been touched and our hearts are joined in heaviness today, O Lord, with the untimely death of Rob Langley, O Lord, murdered even as he tried to do a good deed, O Lord, killed by two assailants who were nothing more than dogs of Satan, O Lord, and we ask thee not to let this be a triumph over Rob, O Lord, but to let this serve as a means, O Lord, of winning others to Christ, O Lord, to glorify Thy name and to prevent Rob's death from being in vain, if it be Thy will and in Your Son's holy name we pray, amen."

Four-fifty p.m. Looking over my notes, I feel confident there's some good stuff there:

"—are men who need to be prayed for to be saved, but at the same time they are accused of murder and need to be prosecuted all the law will allow and if found guilty punished at the earliest possible moment by whatever means prescribed—"

I think he's winding down now. He's turning this into a regular altar call:

"It could have been any one of you instead of Rob. Let's bow our heads once more, keeping our eyes shut and not looking around. If Rob has meant something to you, if you feel touched by his life as well as by his death, if you are not already a Christian, if you are an out-of-duty Christian who needs to renew his faith, if you are the least bit in doubt where you would go if a similar fate happened to you this afternoon, then I encourage you to stand and be saved."

I'm apparently the only one not standing, I note. It's a cheap shot.

Five-fifteen p.m. The eulogies are taking longer than planned. If we get out of here in the next forty-five minutes there will be enough daylight for photos.

I wonder if my wife remembered to make the car payment today. The woman next to me is a real fountain. She's using a sleeve now.

The program says this is Mick Breen, the best friend.

"—buddy is dead and I don't know what to say, except he was the finest friend I've ever known—" Tears are streaming down his bearded cheeks, I note.

"—and he always played a winning game on the field and in life as a Christian. I remember when he and I would toss a football in his front yard. He said to me once, 'Mick, I'm going to make it big on the field one day.' Well, he's made the biggest touchdown a guy could ever hope to make. He gave his life while trying to help somebody. He's played the biggest game of all and won because nobody can hurt him anymore—"

My right foot has gone to sleep. I don't know if I can sit here much longer. I've got the story in my head now anyway:

"EDWARDSVILLE — A good Samaritan was buried yesterday. Cause of death: generosity."

Six-ten p.m. "No pictures, please," the undertaker says. "Okay," I lie.

I'm at the graveside watching attendants place flowers as the funeral procession winds slowly around the circular drive of Everlasting Acres. I've pre-focused the lens for ten feet and racked back the zoom to 55mm. Now I can ride the motordrive without raising the camera and attracting attention. It's almost dark and I'm pushing the Tri-X one f-stop.

The father, children, and fiancée are emerging from the car at the same time. The mother is now being assisted by the fiancée and the father. I'm squeezing off a few shots, hoping noise from the highway covers the motordrive.

Six-twenty p.m. Job's done. I've got some good art. And there's plenty of good quotes for a really emotion-packed story. But looks like I'm not going to make the first half at the game. If only this guy hadn't been so damn trusting.

:The End:



At the park by the bay

The wind beats my face
As it roars
While sailboats speed
Across the bay
An old woman appears
Collecting trash on her way.
Then a sailboat silently skates
Pulling the wind for more
While small possessed waves
Caress the shore
The old woman sees me
Walks my way
Remarks on how today
Is unusually chilly
I say yeah
She heads on her way
While I sit in the park by the bay.

Another woman
Not quite as old
Walking her dog the only friend
She has to hold
Walks my way
She's friendly
I speak
Her dog speaks
Nice day today
At the park by the bay.

A car rolls in
As I write
The wind chills my body
Even though the sun is bright
The car stops and parks
A family gets out
Hamburgers, hotdogs, and children who shout
As they begin to play
I sit and watch
At the park by the bay.

John Riley Morris
October 5, 1980

By Judy Simpson

The experience

By ROBERT CAMPBELL

Death still—
In the quiet of night
a golden place,
Inhabited by the children
of the White Light,
Imparting a beacon
into the night.

Serenity abides here.
The noises of the darkness
add to the pleasure
of being in this place.

The rolling seas are envious
of such a calm.

The forest beckons you,
entices you,
to investigate its
mysteries.

Death itself only
can rival this serenity
that is called
eternity.

Words to a son

You're on the threshold of my door.
You're going out to play.
I have some pretty balls you need.
I'll throw a few your way.

I choose the ones I'll pitch to you,
according to my need.
You choose the ones you want to catch,
among the ones I've freed.

Our love lives, not within this game
of toss we play today.
We each are serving our own name,
and you must walk away.

But, rather, see the love in this,
if not in what we say,
no matter what we choose to toss,
we let each other play.

Ann Spence

The right signs

By JERRY HARRIS

"It's hopeless unless you do something. Today."

Jan raked a hand through her brown hair and sighed. The monthly square-off had begun. I bought time pulling the tab on another Miller, then:

"Best not push it, Jan. I don't want to hear this."

"You don't want to hear that Alice can't have braces 'cause Daddy is behind with his boat payments? You don't want to hear that your wife is getting an ulcer over your financial mess?"

Fighting tears, Jan looked at the mound of bills. I knew I was licked.

That afternoon I scanned the classified section of "The Birmingham News." There were plenty of jobs for accountants, geologists, go-go girls, nurses. Nothing much for an unskilled recent male college graduate. Except sales. I wanted a part-time job and book sales looked good. There were ads for World Book, Britannica, and those of less repute. I circled the numbers and picked up the phone.

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"The key is signs of children. You simply have to know what to look for," Mrs. Agnes Jackson said, easing the Buick Century down a narrow street. "A swing set, a back yard fence, toys scattered in the yard - those are the obvious signs. But you must also look for other tip-offs: a station wagon in the driveway, diapers on the clothesline, pink or lace curtains in a corner window."

Selling encyclopedias, she said, is akin to the ministry. Salesmen are "educational missionaries" who must persevere against all objections to "light lamps of knowledge" in homes everywhere. Children who grow up without our brand of reference book, she said, lag behind on IQ tests, falter in basic math and reading, rarely make it to college. Salesmen must be aggressive - "loving, understanding" - with the "poor dears" who have not yet purchased the Renaissance binding on sale this month. Salesmen have a very special calling, indeed. And the commission is twenty percent.

"There is what we're talking about," she said, interrupting the indoctrination. She stopped the car and pointed to a run-down A-frame. Two kindergarten-aged children were playing in the front yard, an older child was standing in the open doorway eating a Popsicle, and two teenagers were busy hanging faded clothes on a sagging nylon line at the corner of the unpainted clapboard house. Several window panes had been broken and replaced with strips of cardboard. A rusted, doorless Edsel rested atop concrete blocks in the front yard and the decaying front porch seemed overburdened with boxes of tools, a refrigerator and a ratty recliner.

"Do you think they can afford books?"

"Reference library, you mean. Oh yes indeed. It's these kind of people who can't afford NOT to own them. They want their children to do better than they have as parents. Wouldn't you agree?"

She stopped the car and twisted the rear-view mirror around for a better look at her make-up. Mrs. Jackson was one of those older women who could pass for any age between 50 and 80. Her gray hair had a bluish tint and her blood-red lipstick extended above and below her lips in a vague heart shape. She wore six strands of fake gold around her wrinkled neck and a fake diamond on each third finger. The aroma of White Shoulders was stifling. She dabbed on extra blush and her cheeks took on the maroon color of her dress and Aigner purse. Reaching for her satchel, she instructed me to "look and listen, but don't say a word."

"Myyy. What lovely children," she declared loudly. "Mommie home?"

"Ghmmph," said one.

"Yes'um," the other.

The kid with the Popsicle disappeared through the doorway momentarily and returned with a corpulent woman in a faded green sun dress and curlers. Mrs. Jackson was already on the porch.

"Good morning, hon. I'm Mrs. Jackson and this is Mr. Lane. We're here to discuss your children's progress in school," she said, breaking eye contact and reaching for the door.

"C'm in," the prospect mumbled, opening the screen door.

Torn and broken furnishings cluttered the small living room. A brown vinyl couch with exposed springs was propped atop concrete blocks like the family car. A red lawn chair and green ottoman completed the suite. A new-looking Sony color TV blared from a corner beneath a hanging portrait of Jesus knocking at a door. Mrs. Prospect

turned off the volume but not the picture. "All My Children" was on.

"They done misbehaved again?"

"No-no, nothing like that. By the way, I didn't catch your name, Mrs. . . .?"

"Bonnie Jones."

Without waiting for an invitation, Mrs. Jackson sat in the lawn chair and pulled out a prospectus and several trinkets. The toddlers and the kid with the Popsicle stood in the doorway gawking. I chose the ottoman. Mrs. Jones brought in a ladder-back chair and a jelly-glass full of ice water and sat down.

Mrs. Jackson passed out dime banks, replicas of the "A" volume. The children took the souvenirs and sat at her feet on the dusty green linoleum.

"Mrs. Jones, intelligent mothers provide their children with proper educational material because they want to be sure they have a proper foundation in life. We all want our children to do better in life than we have, wouldn't you agree?"

"I thought you wuz from the school. You sellin' somethin'?"

"We're not salesmen, Mrs. Jones. Let me put your mind at ease. We're merely here to demonstrate the value of proper reference material in the home. Any decision to purchase is strictly yours."

Mrs. Jackson conducted a well-rehearsed 45 minute monologue, wrenching "yes-responses" from the woman at intervals. She passed out more trinkets each time the children grew restless and gave pamphlets to the teenagers who finally joined us.

I watched with a combination of aversion and astonishment as Mrs. Jackson wrapped Bonnie Jones around her little finger. I wanted to grab the woman by her shoulders and shake her into reality, tell her she should throw us out of the house. But Alice needed braces. Janice needed security. The bank needed a boat payment.

She gave the youngest child a colorful brochure of animal

pictures and passed around reprints of an article on Disneyland.

"Won't you just look at that, Mrs. Jones. Just look at the way your children take to those reprints. I honestly believe they're above average readers."

Mrs. Jones gazed at the children and smiled for the first time during our visit. But the smile faded and she said something about seeing her husband before buying.

Ignoring the protest, Mrs. Jackson flipped to a page at the rear of her prospectus marked "H. S." for husband sass. The page contained a photo of a beautiful middle class mother holding a little girl. The model appeared to be reading from an encyclopedia as the girl looked on with anticipation. Mrs. Jackson held the page in front of the woman and read the caption aloud:

"A husband works hard providing food, shelter and clothing for his family. It's the mother's place to rear the children and make decisions about their education."

Mrs. Jones looked at the beautiful mother and girl and nodded. Mrs. Jackson pulled out a purchase agreement.

"Just between us girls, Bonnie, wouldn't your husband simply leave it up to you? After all, it's not a selfish thing - it's for the children's sake, isn't it?"

The woman nodded again.

"And look what low monthly payments we've arranged - with no down payment. Less than a dollar a day is not too much to spend for your children's future, now is it?"

Mrs. Jackson placed the purchase agreement on a clipboard and gave it to the woman.

"There's not a thing to fear, hon. We're the leading publishers of encyclopedias in the world. If you should decide that you've made a poor decision, just notify us within three working days. No obligation. Hand her a pen, won't you Mr. Lane?"

"DON'T DO THIS, LADY!" I screamed in my mind.

Silently I gave her the pen. Alice needed braces.

THE END



By Judy Simpson

The palomino mare

On that day I found four horses crosstied for me to exercise. I opted to ride the first two, both black half-thoroughbreds, because they were fiesty, and would require all my energy. I always do dark colored horses first, especially if they are show-horses, because the noon sun would bleach out their coats, and, too, later on, the bugs would distract them, and I'd find the flies were getting more attention than I. After the colts, I rode my favorite, a little Quarter-paint mare. Her pasterns were flexible, and somewhat angular, so she was smooth riding enough to cut diamonds on her back, at a trot, just like all the old Buick commercials. I cooled her off after the ride, and then proceeded to the last mare, the Palomino.

There were two Palominoes on the place, and being half-sisters, these two horses looked very much alike. I still had not learned to tell the two apart, but I knew that one was never exercised, because she was curiously lame quite often, for no apparent reason. I had saved this tawny mare for last, hoping that someone would tell me which one she was. Since my enlightenment never came, I figured that some light exercise would not seriously hurt the lame mare, while a lack of exercise could make the sound one stiff. And so, not wanting to appear so unobservant as to not know the two Palominoes apart, I bitted up the mare in question, and took her out, bare-backed.

We walked around a while, and she warmed up without any signs of lameness. Then we trotted a few figure-eights, and since she seemed fine, I decided to try the pattern at the canter. Her right lead was fine, but she immediately showed great reluctance to take the left lead, and when she finally did, moved so awkwardly that I stopped the exercise and checked her out on the lunge line. As she circled around me, she was perfectly sound until she cantered. She was, indeed, gimpy on the left fore. I walked her home and tied her up. The next day, the owner was furious to find that his horsemanship Palomino was lame again. Both the stableboy and myself were called up. The poor boy bore most of the owner's wrath, but I got off with a very firm "Be sure next time."

I knew the whole incident was my fault. It would have cost me a minimal amount of pride, of ego, to ask "Is this mare out here for air, or for exercise?" Instead, it seemed I had cost the owner three months feed and care, plus the vetting fees. She could not be shown, and her reputation would suffer. Because of that, the asking price of her foals might also suffer, once she was bred. The consequences of that ride really disturbed me. At the end of the summer, I resigned my hard fought for position as rider, and left that place, saying that I would never ride for them again.

The next summer, I saw a familiar rider, on a familiar Palomino. "Is that Abbidy-Scoot?" Using the registered name for the lame mare.

"No, that's another Palomino they sometimes show. They had to put Abby down, I hear."

"Put her down? I knew she'd gone lame, but I was told she'd recover, enough to breed, at any rate." This news was terribly distressing.

"Nope, apparently the leg wouldn't even stand a pregnancy; they put her down in the spring, when things thawed out, and she hadn't improved. Say, I've got a couple of horses to groom, see you later, huh?"

I could not imagine hearing worse news. I had ruined a potentially champion horse. Abby could have meant a great deal to that ranch, suspended as it was between the bush tracks and C-rated shows. To have competed successfully in A-rated shows could have put that man in business. A stud colt out of that champion mare would have assured him of a healthy income for many years. And to think, another week off that leg, and she might have been sound enough to continue her career.

But what had happened to her recovery? The owner would have never allowed anyone to make another mistake with the mare again. She must have been too badly injured to recover. I tried not to think of the tendon tearing that must have gone on in the deep sand of the ring where I'd forced her through those figure eights. Yet these thoughts, and others like it were in my mind all that summer, and as a result, my riding began to fail. I lacked the confidence necessary to keep up the aggressive riding that was my main selling point. I pushed my mounts less and less in competition, and the horses, sensing my insecurity, performed less well. Now I was lamed as effectively as if I had

been hamstrung. By the beginning of the show season, I was more a spectator than a participant.

One day, the vet was called out to examine a horse which I thankfully had not ridden, but which had gone lame. I was holding the animal, so I was there to hear what the doctor had to say.

"Can't tell without an X-ray, of course, but I'm willing to believe it's Navicular, Bob," he began.

"Navicular! He'll eventually have to be put down, then," answered Bob, the trainer.

"It's a hereditary thing, you know. . . this colt's by Skippity Scoot, isn't he? You know we've seen it in his line a couple of times, now."

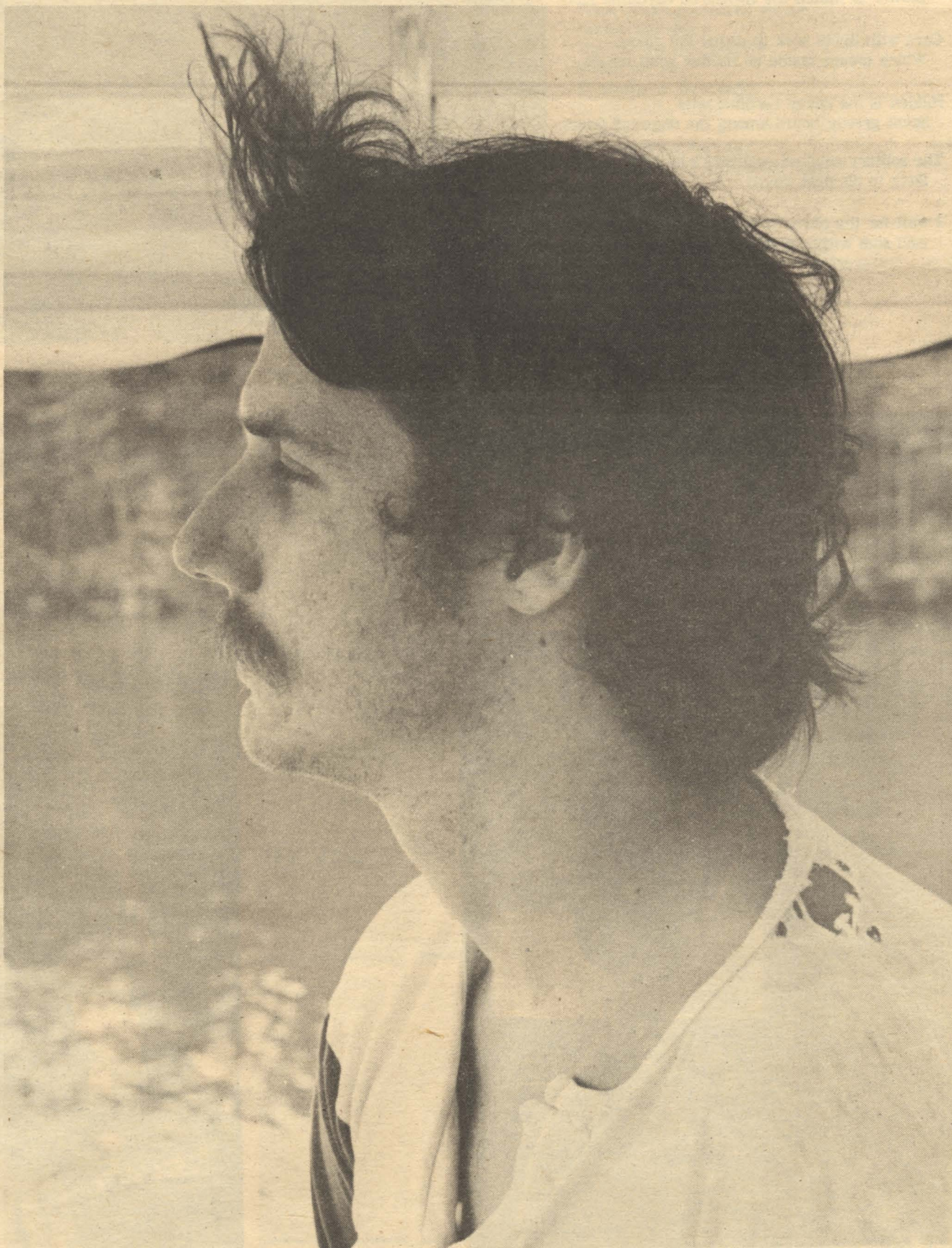
"Not Abbidy-Scoot?" I quickly interjected.

"Yeah, that was that fine Palomino mare they had. Crippled her real quick, faster than usual. They didn't want

to see it in her offspring, so they put her down when it got painful. Can't say as I blame them, either."

After that, the conversation moved on to the few methods of treatment available for the horse I was holding. I didn't even hear Bob tell me to take the horse back to his stall. On Saturday, I took a lack-lustre gelding through a course far too difficult for him well enough to qualify for the jump-off. There, the animal tried valiantly, but was not up to the top-notch competitors. The poor beast ploughed through the second half of a four foot in-and-out. But the owners saw that I was back on top again, and I started getting decent rides again.

Frances Rhett Steel



By Randy Gravette

Window watch

Dull,
Gray,
Sodden!

Rain chases itself down each thing
Made darker, misty by the chase.

Everything changes pace
Slower to match the measured rhythmic rain.

Cars with lights seek to dispel the gloom
Which creeps inside no matter what we do.

Hidden is the saucy cardinal who
Spent greedy hours among the dogwood fruits.

The solitary squirrel sequesters himself
Snug in his nest above.

I wait for the phone to ring
And sigh within myself—
Introverted.

Peggy Moore



By Pond



By Anthony Reynolds



By Darrell Green

The acorn eaters

By BERT SPENCE

"Courage!" he said, and pointed toward the school,
"This mounting wave will roll us classward soon."
In the afternoon they came unto a school
In which it seemed always afternoon.
All 'round the campus the languid students swooned
And breathed like ones that had a drug caused dream,
Full cheeked, some stood above him and mooned
And, like an avalanche; the many greeks
Along the row to fall, and piss and puke did seem.

A land of Greeks! Some, in their avalanche,
Slow witted groups of thinnest brain, did go;
And some through yellow lights and red ones ran,
And headed for the casks and kegs of foam below,
They saw the amber river toward them flow
From the land of a thousand streams and from the moun-
tains;
Three silent pinnacles of aged snow
That stood flood-lit, and dotted with cameras and anxious
fans,
When up climbed Hoyt Axton into the shadowy pines and
said
"Head for the mountains."

The charmed sunset couldn't be found
In the red-neck South, but through dorm clefts Bibb Graves
Was seen far in, and the lovely sound of chimes
Emanated from the tape machine through many a winding
hall
And stairway, a building trimmed with brick, as were all;
A school where all things always seemed the same!
And round about the keg with faces pall,
Dark pupils widened, even against a rosy flame,
The dull eyed ennui ridden acorn eaters came.

Handfuls they bore of that enchanted nut,
Laden with bark and hull, whereof they gave
To freshmen, but those that did taste of the nut
And pledge, to him the handing of diploma
Far far away did seem, and in a sort of coma
Was his brain, and if his fellow spake,
It was: "Hey, were you at the mixer with ZTA, man? It
was great!"
And deep asleep in class he seemed, yet was awake!
(Not like the ones who truly slept, head in hand, and could
not stay awake.)
And music in his ears his Pioneer 45 watt perchannel
receiver did make.

They sat them down and listened to the band
Between the bar and stage at "Brother's Bar"
And sweet it was to dream of adult-land;
Of graduation, and job, and career, but evermore
Most weary seemed the pen, weary the book,
Weary the wandering paths between warm bed and PAB.
Them someone said, "We will learn no more";
And all at once they sang, "The real world
Is far beyond our imagination; we will learn no more."

Greek Choric Song

1
There is rock music here that harder falls
Than coconuts from palms upon the grass
Or night-hails on still cars parked 'tween these dorms
Of nondescript brick, in a prison-like campus;
Music that harder on the ear lies
Than fly-swatters on doomed flies;
Music that sends sweet sleep back to the blissful skies.
Here are grey molds deep,
And through the molds the roaches creep,
And in the class the long-toothed teacher weeps,
And from the flimsy desk we students hang in sleep.

2
Why are we weighed upon with tests,
And utterly perplexed by the simplest
Lectures, while all others have classes that are easiest?
Others at this school can pass: Why? Why should we fail
alone?
We only fail, who are the worst at things;
And make perpetual moan
As, because of over cutting, we from class are thrown;

Nor cease from getting dirty looks
Made with furrowed brow when our counselors we talk with
of careers;
And always harken when our spirit sings,
"There is no joy but beer!"
Why should we only fail, the ones of us who monetarily are
on top of things?

3
Lo! In the middle of the quad,
The THC is wooed from out the bud
With tokes upon the bahng, and there
Get high and hungry us that take no care.
We are soap steeped at noon, and in the light of moon
Nightly pizza fed, and turning fat,
We fall, and roll adown the hill.
Lo! Sweetened with Bacardi light,
The full-juiced lemon (or lime) helps us really mellow out,
And drop down for a silent bed-spinning night.
All its allotted length of days
The semester ripens in its place,
Ripens, and fades, and goes, and still we fail,
Rooting for acorns in the fruitful soil.

4
Hateful is the dark blue sky,
Vaulted o'er the tall pine trees.
Graduation is the end of life; ah, why
Should life all studying be?
Let us get high. Grass takes effect very fast,
And in a little while our lips are numb.
Let us get high. What drug is it that lasts?
All things are taken from us, and become
Portions and packages of the dreadful past.
Let us get high. What pleasure can we have
To war with ignorance? Is there any peace
In ever stacking up the stacking books?
All courses have finals, except the ones we've took.
In silence we sit as test, lecture, lecture, test and final
cease:
Give us long parties, dances, drugs, and dreamless ease.

5
"How sweet to party;" say we, the sluggard Greeks,
To give half-closed parties, all invited save for freaks;
(They are the ones not dressed reptilian, in short, geeks.)
To drink and drink the yonder amber drink,
Which leaves its mark upon the tongue; (and likewise
makes it hard to think)
To hear each other's slurred speech;
Scarfig down acorns day by day;
To, on spring break, head for Daytona Beach,
And tender curving lines of creamy skin;
To lend our livers and minds, though they lack,
To the influence of mild tasting, mellow Jack;
To tan, and sail, and gaze at scarce clad lovelies
With our lecherous eyes of post pubescence,
Red-rimmed from use of mounds of grass
And lines cut from white dust; to sneak our hands into
preppy, lacy, bras.

6
Dear is the memory of our high-school lives,
And dear the home-cooked food, the baked potato (with
chives!)
And lots of warm butter, but all hath suffered change;
For surely now our household ovens are cold,
Our mothers liberated have become, our father's moods are
strange,
And we at home are merely in the way of parents practicing
the latest Master's and Johnson's techniques.
Or else a little sibling, overbold,
Has stolen our bedroom. And anyway, the radio sings
Before us of the perpetual war with Troy,
And of Ed Lett's great deeds, we must stay here to see these
things.
Why travel home to spend a boring little while?
Let us, now broken away, so remain.
Our parents are hard put to reconcile;

'Tis hard for them to keep order, and they are fighting once
again.
At home is confusion worse than death;
Trouble on trouble, pain on pain,
Long fights unto seeming death.
Sere tasks to ears worn out from parental wars.
And eyes grown dim with dividing the house and cars.

7
Ah, propped on mattresses both old and holey,
How sweet-in spring when warm airs lull us, blowing
slowly-
With half-dropped eyelid still,
Beneath a heaven grey, nine stories, and holy,
To watch the long tanned legs arriving slowly,
Returning from classes at the university in Jacksonville;
To hear the dewy voices answer when we're calling
From boy's dorm to girl's on the telephone line;
To watch the many colored sorority labels falling
(It sometimes seems) down the stairs shrieking words like
"divine"
When they learn it's a KA mixer we're attending and they
find
That we drive Z cars and Camaros; and if we're af-
fectionate they
will reciprocate in kind.

8
The oak trees grow all over Jacksonville;
The Acorns found in valley or on hill.
All day the Southerners blow loud with mellow tone;
They're heard all over campus. (especially the
sousaphones)
Round and round through residence and academic hall the
oak pollen is blown.

We have had enough of learning, and of studying, we.
Blood driven from the left, Miller driven from the right,
what time have we left free?
Where the Kappa Sigma house sits on the path to PAB,
There let us swear an oath, and keep it in our feeble
minds,
In the boring Acorn-land to live and lie reclined,
On the row like Gods together, careless of the independent
kind.
Let them study and go to class while we chase girls-
The ones whose jeans are tight and hair is curled-
Round our fraternity houses. When they are slightly drunk
they'll do anything in the world.
That's why we smile in secret, when we look out over Acorn-
land.
Let others work, and research, and write, and read, and
study and . . .
Ad infinitum. Let others think for themselves, while we
together band.

For they will smile and find joy in accomplishing something
on their own,
While we will sing a lamentation for the few things we must
do alone,
Like going to the bathroom, or grocery store, or using the
telephone.
Any task that is solitary is shunned by us as toil
That is too tedious, and goes against the spirit of
Brotherhood and soils

Our reputation as a group of brainless brats whose
imaginations are rusty and need oil,
If indeed they've not already perished from lack of use,
As we only dig them out to create new methods for passing
without studying and to devise clever ruses

For fooling teachers into thinking we're in class when we
are taking well deserved snoozes.
Surely, surely slumber is more sweet than class when we've
been out 'till three the night before,
More sweet than accomplishing anything worthwhile or
doing what our parents sent us here and are paying
for;
O, rest ye, fraternity brothers; we will not be
educated more.



JACKSONVILLE STATE UNIVERSITY
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By Darrell Green

EH 301

Word
after
Word.

Story follows Story.
The End
brings
Once Upon
a Time.

The unending Lines of Literature.

Pages pillared of packed
paragraphs.

In the midst of it all
lies
life.

The Life
of people present—
past,
All the same.

Lessons—
not of perfection,
but of
practices
and
practical events.

Yet—
Lessons of
fantasy
and
festivity
sneak in
bringing
simple delight.

The Writer, the Poet, the man
with
a
flair.

All in line as one,
to take me

on their
trip—
relate their
idea—
pen their
rhyme.

They are of me.
I am of them.

The words make us one.
Their story is
my story.
Their end—
is my beginning.

Amy Bliss Mason